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2 January 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Request for Access to the "Coherent Spectrum Shaper"

1. This morning the Director received a call from Fred Buzhardt, Special Counsel to the President, asking for the Agency's assistance through the loan of a Coherent Spectrum Shaper and an operator for use on some White House tapes. (The inference was that the machine would be used on tapes which were currently not an issue between the courts, the Ervin Committee, and the Special Prosecutor.) The Director told Mr. Buzhardt he would look into the possibility and call him back.

2. The Director then met with Messrs. Duckett, Warner, and Cary to discuss certain of the technical aspects of the use of this machine along with the legal and political considerations involved. Mr. Duckett said the machine and an operator could be provided if it was decided that this should be done. He did, however, raise some questions as to whether the machine which Mr. Buzhardt had requested was in fact what was needed. There are several other machines that might do a better job, depending on the nature of the problem.

3. Mr. Cary pointed out that the loan of such equipment and an operator would surely become known and in view of our experiences with our congressional committees posed a problem. The potential for press distortion of such assistance to the White House is virtually limitless. All agreed, however, that there was nothing basically improper in our providing this assistance to the White House so long as nothing was done to distort the tape. Mr. Duckett pointed out it was possible to use the Spectrum Shaper without the operator actually listening to the tape.

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(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE VII-5)

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4. Mr. Colby called Mr. Buzhardt back at about 9:45 this morning and made the following points:

a. We would be willing to make the machine available, preferably outside CIA buildings.

b. We would recommend that someone other than a CIA employee operate the machine. Mr. Mark Weiss, who was engaged by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in connection with the Watergate tapes, and Mr. Howard Rosenblum, of NSA, were suggested.

c. Any CIA involvement with White House tapes obviously would raise some serious problems.

d. The Coherent Spectrum Shaper may not be the solution to the problem.

e. In view of the Director's responsibilities to the Chairmen of the CIA Subcommittees, he would have to advise Chairman Nedzi and either Chairman Stennis or Senator Symington that this assistance was being given the White House.

5. Mr. Buzhardt was reluctant to use Mr. Mark Weiss, or anyone else who had participated in the work on White House tapes for the Court, but he plans to talk to Secretary of Defense Schlesinger about the use of Mr. Rosenblum.

[redacted]

GEORGE L. CARY, JR.
Legislative Counsel

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